

Washington, D.C. - Congressman John Barrow (GA-12) announced today that Georgia has qualified for unemployment insurance (UI) modernization funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which Congress passed and President Obama signed into law earlier this year.

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“Too many folks in Georgia are out of work, and this money couldn't come at a better time,” said Barrow. “The news today is that the national unemployment rate has jumped to 9.4%, and the rate in Georgia has been even higher. This money will help tide families over until the job market improves, and even help some folks qualify for a better job than the one they had before.”

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The Department of Labor certified the release of \$220,286,144 in UI modernization funds to Georgia. Georgia qualified for the funds available under the Recovery Act by agreeing to a number of provisions that assist entrants to the workforce, part-time workers, and people who are upgrading their skills. The Georgia Department of Labor can use the funds to pay unemployment benefits or, if appropriated by the legislature, for administering its unemployment insurance program or delivering employment services.

“Georgia has made important updates to its UI program to better meet the needs of the 21st century workforce,” said Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis. “The UI modernization provisions adopted in Georgia help unemployed workers who have entered the workforce recently, work part time, or need training to become re-employed receive the benefits they need and deserve.”

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"Workers pay into this system while they're working, and they've earned these benefits," added Barrow. "If their jobs have been eliminated and they need to upgrade their skills, or they have a part time job to help their families make ends meet, they need these benefits right now. This is a new situation we're in, and we need to make sure our unemployment benefits keep up with changes in the economy."

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